

The Archbishop's Test

by

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MOREHOUSE-BARLOW CO.

NEW YORK 1960

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TO THE FRIEND TO WHOM I AM INDEBTED FOR THE IDEA OF THIS BOOK

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BY SOWERS PRINTING COMPANY, LEBANON, PA.

Preface

The Archbishop's Test is not a new piece of fiction: it appeared first in London in 1914, and a year later in New York, but Anglicans ever since have been discovering it and have been amazed at its timeless relevance. In recent months various periodicals have mentioned it or have quoted from it, and so sent people on fruitless searches for the book in libraries and second-hand bookstores, both in America and in England. A reprinting of *The Archbishop's Test* may not be justified because people are talking about the book or cannot get a copy, nor because it recalls a day long past and a country and a Church now somewhat changed, but rather because it speaks to a present condition and with a voice longing to be heard in our own time and place.

1

NOW that all the ceremonies are over," said the chaplain, "I fear that I must remind your Grace that there is an immense accumulation of correspondence needing attention."

The Archbishop was looking out into the sunshine with a preoccupied air, and did not immediately answer; after a few minutes he said dreamily:

"Are there many letters?"

"An appalling number. Half of them are requests for your patronage of Church societies. I can answer those if you like without your troubling to read them. It is a foregone conclusion that the Archbishop is president of every Church society."

Again the Archbishop was silent—provokingly so, for the minutes wasted might have seen several letters answered by the secretaries waiting in the next room.

The chaplain was bent upon organization. To organize well from the first was the great thing, the pigeonholes and tape were ready, the secretaries well chosen; all that was needed was for the Primate to give the word and the machinery of the province would show its perfect working.

"Is it a foregone conclusion that I am the Archbishop?"

It was the chaplain's turn to hesitate now. "I do not quite understand," he murmured. "No?" said the other, smiling. "Well, for the moment let us forget that we have always been Tom and Jack to each other since the old Twyford days. You beat me there, as you beat me at Eton and Oxford, and yet by the providence of God I am today Archbishop and I shall always claim from you what a man asks of his dearest friend. But you will sometimes wonder and possibly doubt. All I ask of you is patience. Some things I shall explain, for the rest you must trust me."

Crawford murmured a few words, and the Archbishop went on: "I come to this post at a critical time. The Prayer Book revision scheme is waiting for me, and many other schemes of importance. I know quite well that the eyes of England are upon me to see what line I take in a complicated struggle."

The chaplain bowed in silence.

"We two archbishops have taken counsel with each other, and now we are approaching the bishops of the provinces, and perhaps the greatest difficulty will be with them."

Crawford's surprise kept him silent.

"Some of the schoolmaster bishops will not lightly part with organization," continued the

Archbishop. "Really the activities of the religious world today are overwhelming. They killed my predecessor, for, after all, an archbishop is but human, and there are only twenty-four hours in a day and a night. Have you ever considered, Tom, all that the late Archbishop did? To be head of a province is enough, without being head of a diocese! Then, think of the societies and the meetings, the work in the House of Lords, the work all over the world where the Church is in communion with Canterbury. Think of the books he must read, the subjects he must get up, the sermons he must preach! Does it leave him any leisure for prayer and meditation and the saving of his own soul?"

In spite of the questions asked, the Archbishop did not seem to expect any answer, and as he ceased speaking, he covered his face with his hands and sighed deeply.

"I wish I could do more," said Crawford. "Of course it is a terrible responsibility, but I suppose it must go on."

"Some things must go on, but now I will tell you our scheme, and you, who are deeply conservative in spite of your Oxford socialism, will not like it. We are not going on with the revision of the Prayer Book, and for this reason: The Prayer Book as it stands has never had a chance. Give it a chance, and then if it fails we may think about revision, but it shall have its chance."

"I should have thought," said Crawford, "that it had had a pretty long chance.". "Consider a moment. Can you point to the bishop or parish priest who obeys the Prayer Book in every particular?"

"Honestly," said Crawford, "I cannot think of any point in which the bishops err."

"What about the age for confirmation? What about matters of personal discipline? Are fast days observed in every palace? Oh, go deeper, Crawford, do the lonely parish priests find in their bishop a shepherd? Does he hold up the weak and bind up the broken? Is he always gentle to all destitute of help? O God, if we might be! Believe me, the fault begins with us."

The spring sunlight lingered on the Thorn-Crowned Head of the Man of Sorrows in the old picture on the wall, and for a moment the eyes of both men were fixed on it.

"Then there are the plain orders of the Prayer Book which are openly set at naught in most parishes—the order of the Daily Offices are to be used. It is small wonder that men in the army and navy speak slightly of Church discipline, for such negligence would be impossible in the Service. Now, our scheme is this: We plead that for two years the Prayer Book shall be obeyed, and for those two years all the good societies which try to supplement the present laxity shall cease their work. Of course we cannot enforce the latter, but I earnestly hope that the scheme may have a trial. Now we will draft a letter which, with slight alterations, will do for every society soliciting my patronage, and, if at the end of two years it should seem well that the society should continue, I will then become its patron."

Blank dismay was written on the chaplain's face.

"Let me speak this once," he pleaded, "and afterwards I will hold my peace. May I say just what I think as in the old days?"

"Of course you may, old fellow."

"Well, have you considered all that there is just now to make so radical an experiment risky? The moral atmosphere is charged with electricity, only the greatest wisdom can steer clear of an explosion."

"An explosion is better than indifference."

"Yes, but is this the time for it? Materialism has had its day, mysticism is in the air, it may make for faith, or it may run wild. Is it the hour for new developments?"

"No, but the Prayer Book is scarcely new."

"Your proposed attitude to it will be."

"Should it be new?"

"Oh, you will beat me with argument, but just think of the result of your action. I must say it plainly. It will be utterly unpopular."

"If it were popular I should hesitate," said the Archbishop gravely. "Was John the Baptist popular? The Church in this country has failed because we have tried to run it on the conventions of society—with respectability thrown in."

"Oh, Jack, listen! Forget for a moment that you are the Archbishop, and consider other things. Reverse the Red Queen's advice, and remember how young you are. Nearly all the bishops are older than you, and they have plodded along on certain lines for years; you will offend them. Your scheme may be a sound one, but are you the man to carry it out?"

His friend rose to his feet and walked over to the window, his face half hidden from Crawford.

"Then there are other things in the air," went on the chaplain. "We don't want a split now for many reasons. I am not thinking so much of politics and the Welsh Bill as—as some things."

"What things?"

"Well, I have just been down in Essex, and there the Roman Catholics are increasing rapidly. They have schools, and are building churches, and our people are going over."

"Ah!"

The Archbishop came back to his chair, and looked his chaplain straight in the face.

"You are right in saying that I am not the man for so great a work; but being the Archbishop, I have no choice. In all else that you say (except about my youth, which will soon change) your arguments are against your convictions. Materialism is passing. Don't you see that now more than ever thought is of infinitely greater importance than action, and prayer, the highest thought of all, is the one thing that counts? It is strange that in the many letters about the Athanasian Creed in the daily press, no one has laid hold of this, its underlying current: that the spring of all life is belief, and therefore it is thought not action that needs our primary

care. You remember how we both devoured Bishop Paget's Essay on Thoughts long ago? Then the Roman invasion tells entirely on my side, for I know in what the attraction of Rome lies. She speaks with authority, and she shows men that in the Church lies all the help and comfort and pardon which they need. We must be more spiritual, not less, if we are to win back England."

"It is a risky experiment."

"It should not be an experiment. We ought to act as if we believed that God could manage His Church and His world. The Prayer Book, founded on Scripture, grasps the truth that prayer is the divine tool to be used; but we have set it aside, and tried man-made plans. To my mind it is not a question of which mode will be the more successful so much as a question as to which is right."

"If all Church societies stop working for two years, you will create in many lives an unwonted amount of leisure."

The Archbishop laughed.

"Well, that certainly is needed at the present time. They will get time to think, and they can attend the daily services."

Crawford frowned, then he said:

"Do not think me ungracious, or unwilling to help you to the uttermost of my power, but really I shall be no help if I am not convinced by your scheme. I see its bearings, and I know that from your point of view you are right, but——"

"Yes, there is a great 'but.' "

"Let me resign," cried the chaplain; "there are a dozen men who would help you more—Ridley, Holt, Cunningham. For your own sake, put one of them in my place. The days are coming when the world, if not the Church, will be against you, and you will be terribly lonely. Oh, let me go! In some obscure parish I will work out your scheme to the uttermost, but here I shall be no good."

The deep grey eyes turned on him with a light that no man could mistake.

"Better you, Tom, as you are, than another man red-hot with enthusiasm. There must be an 'opposition'; you will help me to see it here before it comes upon me from outside. But I keep you because you are my friend, and you can help me as can no other man in the wide world."

2

THE Archbishops of Canterbury and York had spoken and sat down again, waiting in the crowded library, where the expression on each bishop's face was a study.

The member of the episcopal bench who thought the least was the first to speak, and his voice betrayed the fact that he was very angry.

He did not understand what their Graces meant; it would seem as if they were on their trial for deacon's orders, rather than the heads of sees, where they had been for many years. There was nothing new in the Prayer Book, they all knew the Prayer Book and obeyed it, and speaking for his own diocese he could say that as a whole his clergy obeyed it. There were a few young men, tainted with aesthetic notions and love of ritual who were inclined to tamper with the Prayer Book and introduce Romish vestments and customs; but their number was few, and he should have thought that the Archbishops might have realized that it had been his ceaseless endeavor to thwart those young men, and convince them of their errors. If there were any others in his diocese guilty of disobeying the Prayer Book, he should be thankful to have their names brought to his notice. He sat down hot and defiant, and the Primate's calm voice came as a soft breeze after a thunderstorm. He was bringing no accusations against any diocese or parish; he was calling attention to rubrics and orders, in some cases so long left in abeyance that they were practically forgotten. Perhaps the most generally ignored of these orders was the direction to read Morning and Evening Prayer daily; if in the diocese of the last speaker it was a general custom, the parishes of his diocese were blessed beyond words.

Then arose a stormy discussion on the subject of daily services, some avowing that they were a waste of valuable time, which might better be spent in parochial visitation and convincing the sinner of the error of his ways.

"The clergy cannot visit sinners or righteous men at 7 A.M.," said the bishop. "If they are not in church they are probably in bed."

But the Archbishop was too wise to check discussion. When everyone had said all that he wished

to say, and very many who had said nothing had been quietly turning over the leaves of the Prayer Book and taking mental notes, the Archbishop again got up and looked at the faces before him.

Afterwards Crawford described it to Dennett the secretary.

"He stood up and spoke with that manner of his which disarms hostility, and in one minute he had made them feel how much he respected their age and experience, but he made them feel too that 'by the providence of God he was Archbishop,' and if, in his governance he erred through youth or indiscretion, he craved their pardon and prayers. Somehow, then, we seemed to have got the meeting on to a higher platform. You remember how he used to speak at the Union and bowl over all opposition? It was something like that now. He spoke of the Church as a divine society, and the Prayer Book as her manual, and then he touched on the truth that all the real work is done in the world through prayer, which, translated into other language, simply means that God does it, not we. Then he showed how it was the intention of

the Church that daily should the Great Sacrifice be pleaded, but he allowed that in some parishes that was not yet possible. Still in every parish prayers should be said daily that a perpetual intercession might go up for every estate of man. And then came in his reason for suspending the work of societies. When all was done by the Church it would be superfluous. Then we went on to other things—the due notice of fast days, and their proper observance, the restoration of Holy Baptism on Sundays and holy days to its place after the Second Lesson, instruction of the children in the Catechism during Evening Prayer on Sundays, and by this time I think it began to dawn on the lord bishops that the Prayer Book had not been generally obeyed. You will notice that the Archbishop did not argue about any of these matters, he merely dwelt on them as parts of the Prayer Book at present neglected."

"And was that all?" asked Dennett.

"No, among other things he specified the exhortation to be read in giving notice of the Holy Communion, and in conjunction with this he said that the people had a right to know of the absolution in the Office of the Visitation of the Sick, and also that it was desirable to get those who could not attend an ordination to study the service in their Prayer Books. At this point the Bishop of D—, the first speaker, got up suddenly, and asked whether his Grace wished to introduce auricular confession, upon which his Grace said that he wished the Prayer Book to be known in its entirety, and he had mentioned portions commonly overlooked. He left it to them to draw what teaching from the Prayer Book seemed right. There were other things, but I have told you the chief points."

"And now—the deluge," said the secretary, shrugging his shoulders.

"I suppose so," answered Crawford.

There was no lack of newspaper copy that night, and the only pity from a journalistic point of view was that this had not come in the "silly" season, for at present, with the heated state of politics, and the London season in full swing, it was difficult to find room for it all. Moreover, qualified writers on so strange a theme could not be produced at an hour's notice, and none of the ordinary staff knew anything about the Prayer Book.

Neither the editor nor the sub-editor of one of the leading dailies remembered anything about Holy Baptism, though the editor was present at the christening of his only child, which took place one afternoon, and he recollected that he tipped the verger for opening the church. Just as an office boy was flying out to buy or borrow a Prayer Book, a girl journalist came in who supplied occasional church notes.

To her surprise and delight she was taken to the editor's room, where a council had been called of any who might help—a clerk interested in "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons," a reporter known to sing in a church choir, and a few others. The matter was rapidly explained, and the girl was asked whether her knowledge of the Church and the Prayer Book was sufficient for her to write a story which would be above the numerous items that would appear tomorrow

in the papers. The editor said that if she could guarantee the matter and express it roughly he would throw it into shape.

"Give me a room and an hour's quiet," said the girl with a twinkle in her eye, "and you shall have a story that contains no inaccuracies."

Everything was provided for her, with the result that the next day one paper contained an article which showed knowledge of the matter in hand, and none of the readers knew that it was owed to a girl educated at a Woodard school, to whom the Church was a reality.

Clerical letters poured in on the editor, congratulating him on the line he had taken, and it was assumed in theological circles that the story was written by one of the canons of St. Paul's Cathedral.

The girl herself was astonished at the money she received for her hour's work, and still more astonished when she was taken on as a writer of church articles; but it meant comfort for an invalid mother, and freedom from daily anxiety. London posters that day exhibited the Archbishop in every possible light.

"Archbishop's Radical Reforms."

"Archbishop's Condemnation of Societies."

"Archbishop's High Church Movement."

"Archbishop Offends the Bench."

"Archbishop's Novel Programme."

"Archbishop" is a long word, but it was a word that well repaid its outlay, and the papers sold briskly all day, for when the morning papers had set forth the facts, and all that their respective editors thought on the matter, it was time to proclaim how the scheme was received in nonconformist and other circles, which it affected not at all.

Crawford lost patience, but the Archbishop smiled quietly, and said that he should like that one story preserved, and the editor of the paper thanked.

The article called attention to the fact that for some time the Bishop of London had tried to restore the ministration of Holy Baptism to its right ful place, and it was that sentence which determined the editor to leave the article alone, for the Bishop of London would carry the public with him, and the editor felt that he himself could not quote a single opinion which that prelate held on the Prayer Book.

For a few days newspaper columns were flooded with correspondence, then a millionaire committed suicide, and there was a great railway accident, which called away the interest of the public, so that the word "Archbishop" was no longer kept in large type for daily use, and posters told of other things.

3

A first an idea had got abroad that when the Archbishop was no longer to speak at meetings,

his day would be singularly free and unoccupied; but he made it known that he was at the service of his people, and he saw every one who wished to see him if he could help that person.

At the beginning the clergy came to see him in order to tell him how extremely difficult it was to obey the Prayer Book.

"I know," said the Archbishop ingenuously. "If it had been easy it would have been done long ago."

One day a middle-aged country priest with a worn, tired face came, and the Archbishop expecting the usual complaint, was surprised when the man began to thank him.

His story came out by degrees, for he was slow of speech as a man is apt to be who seldom meets his equals. He was the vicar of a small parish miles from a railway station, and from one year's end to another no one helped or cheered him. His parishioners had all they could do to earn their daily bread; incessant toil seemed to have taken from them the faculty of desiring any spiritual gifts.

To them the priest meant some one who cared for their poor, tired bodies, and who gave them good water and drainage, as much as the Steward of the Holy Mysteries beyond their ken.

He never heard any one else preach, and he could not afford to take a London paper, or to have a holiday. So it was no wonder that his sermons were dull, and his flock unspiritual. Now he had been to his brother's funeral, and as he was passing through London he felt that he must thank the Archbishop for his Pastoral, for it was the only thing in all these years which made him hope that he had not failed utterly.

He had tried to obey the Prayer Book. The very few baptisms they had were administered on Sundays during some service, and he had always had the Daily Offices.

No one came but an old blind woman.

For the last four years he had to give up the church school, for tithe had gone down- and there

was no one else to help—but he was keeping his Grace, he would go on to Waterloo Station.

"No," said the Archbishop, "you will lunch with me, it is one o'clock."

He looked at the worn, shiny clothes, the trousers baggy at the knees, with a feeling of reverence, and his genial smile set his visitor at ease.

All through luncheon it was not the Prayer Book of which they talked, but of Oxford, with its hundred memories. Why, it was nearly twenty years since any one had talked to the lonely man of Oxford, and he found himself laughing in a most unwonted manner.

The car was ordered, and the Archbishop said that it was quite easy for him to drop his visitor at Waterloo. He said, moreover, that he should be coming near his parish in the autumn, and he would preach for him on All Saints' Day if it were convenient.

The color rushed into the priest's face, and he could hardly express his thanks. No one had ever offered to help him before, and now his lonely out-of-the-way parish was to have a visit from the Archbishop.

"Why did you do it?" asked Crawford later, during the half-hour's talk they generally had, when

their respective positions were ignored. "It is six miles from a station, and he would have been grateful for a much lesser light, such as one of us."

"He is signally destitute of help," said the Archbishop gravely. "There is no need to offer to preach in St. Peter's, Eaton Square, but various causes will take me to obscure country parishes. I promised Sir James Bellingham today that I would come down to Lessingway, where he is church-warden, and is giving his rector rather a bad time." "I guessed that he came to complain." "Yes, he said that Jervis was starting ritualistic innovations, which he, as a staunch upholder of the Established Church, did not mean to allow for a moment. He took his stand on the Prayer Book, and at that point I broke in, saying that I was very glad to hear it, for I wished to have the Prayer Book obeyed, and that I should lose no time in arranging a Sunday with his rector, when I would come down and preach on the subject, and see for myself what were the practices in the parish."

"You did not ask Sir James to luncheon?" "No, he needs no encouragement, and he could go to his club; but I promised to stay with him, and I hope to leave him a wiser man. The ignorance about the Prayer Book is amazing. Each point of which he complains is a rule of the Prayer Book.

But we must have patience."

"Some of the side issues of your scheme are somewhat surprising."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, there is an enormous decline in preaching and a great advance in teaching, with the result that thinking men go more to Church. The instruction in the Catechism after the Second Lesson at Evensong is taking the place of the ordinary sermon, and last week at a socialistic debate, the Church Catechism was largely quoted. Some of the leading members attend St. Petrox, Westminster, and the priest had been explaining the duty to our neighbor. It is a common taunt to say that the Church inculcates keeping a man in that state of life in which he is born, and it was a study to see the socialists' faces as he spoke on the words 'To do my duty in that state of life to which it shall please God to call me.' You can picture the way he would do it, and how he would bring in all that the Church had done to help the workingman, from the education by the monasteries to the schools of the National Society. Greedy was there, and he is honest to the core, and he it was who reproduced it all at the Debating Society. The men were better acquainted with Oliver Lodge's Catechism than the Church Catechism, but Creedy had his Prayer Book, and read through the duty to one's

neighbor, and some of the men said that they could not beat it with their own ideas. And then at the end of the debate Pringle got up and said, "A revolution is coming in London as sure as fate, but whether it will be a bloodless revolution or not depends on whether we are faithful to our duty towards God and our duty towards our neighbor."

"Bravo, Pringle!"

"Yes, but these things are the exception. The majority of parishes in the country are greatly upset."

"To be upset may lead to a desirable readjustment."

"Or to some of the particles rolling elsewhere."

"If they roll away so easily, are they worth keeping?"

There was silence for a time, then Crawford said:

"I suppose we have come to the parting of the ways. In reality people are beginning to understand that the negations of the Faith are not its central life. In spite of discussion and bitterness we are harking back to what is Catholic and primitive."

"We are, indeed. It is impossible to guess what the next fifty years will see. The day of protesting is past. Man needs today something positive, though he may not know it. Tomorrow he will realize his need."

"And it is —?"

"The Catholic Faith, of course. Ah, Crawford, England has lost the art of worship. She believes in one God, but she does not worship Him. She argues about Him, she is preached to about Him, but when England again worships, our evil days will be past. Think of the time when through the length and breadth of the country, there were no boys gentle or simple who did not sing or serve at the altar. What is the service of the altar today to the boys of our country squires? Has the average public schoolboy any realization of the Person of our LORD? No, religion and Christianity are thought of as unpleasant duties."

Silence fell, and Crawford puffed away at his pipe, his thoughts filled with the memory of Sundays in Eton Chapel, while the Archbishop dreamt of the days when England would be once more merry, having discovered in the Catholic Faith all that met her needs, and finding happiness at last through seeking the will of God.

It was a simple method which had taken long to be discovered.

But as a rule such dreams were the brightest side of the picture, for no one hesitated to bring to his notice all the drawbacks of his scheme.

Organization had become so deeply engrained in the life of many parishes that it was hard to say when it was taken away what would remain.

"We had hoped so much from our sale of handiwork," said one lady, "for our vicar has only lately been appointed, and we heard that he had so many original ideas. Not that we have raffles—we always set our face against them—but the Irish curate started a hat-trimming

competition for the men, and our vicar did wonders at Lexford. And now the Bishop wants us to raise money for the Church by systematic almsgiving. I don't know what parishes are coming to. The dissenters will have it all their own way."

There was no lack of correspondence in the newspapers, over which Crawford often shook his head.

Would the two years go by, and leave only a hopeless disintegration of all that had meant religion to so many?

"Pleasant Sunday Afternoons" became the sole property of Non-conformity, but strange to say they were not unduly crowded; and nothing surprised people more than the fact that the teaching of the Catechism at Sunday Evensong in every parish church was creating an interest in religion in every class of society.

After all, there was a science in theology which the ordinary man had little suspected, and the scientific fact that difficulty was the soul's fortune appealed to the higher parts of human nature in a way that the popularizing of religion had never done. But all real growth is silent, and dissatisfaction clamored noisily at the Archbishop's door.

4

THE Archbishop's servants were often sorely puzzled as to how to announce the visitors who arrived constantly, for many of them declined to give any name, and it was difficult to know whether to class them as "a gentleman," or "a lady," or under the comprehensive term of "a person."

One day the butler made a fresh departure and announced, "Some one to see your Grace," and met with the immediate reply:

"Show him in."

The library door was flung open, and some one entered whose appearance was in striking contrast to the beauty and stateliness of her surroundings. Shabbiness of dress could go no further, and the thin face was colorless.

"Will you sit down," said the Archbishop, indicating a chair, and waiting for the words which did not come.

"You wanted to see me?" he said at last in his kind voice, and she raised her eyes to his—eyes as blue as a child's.

Then she dropped her gaze and clenched her hands tightly.

"Oh," she murmured, "I have sinned exceedingly."

None of his visitors hitherto had ever begun like this, and for a moment he was silent, then he said gently:

"God is very merciful."

"Yes," she answered, "I know it. I should like to tell you."

"Tell me," he answered gravely.

"Things had come to an end," she went on quickly. "I tried to get work, but no one wanted me. I am not clever, and I am getting old; no one wants you when you are not young. . . . And . . . there . . . was . . . nothing more to sell. . . . Then ... I was walking down a street, and there was the smell of a baker's shop, and I looked in——"

"Yes?"

"And the woman was not looking, and——"

"Yes?"

"I took a loaf."

The ticking of the clock became suddenly audible; or was it the throbbing of all the hearts all over the world in unbearable pain?

The Archbishop was about to speak when the woman went on:

"After I had eaten it, I realized what I had done, I brought up a ——, I had done this terrible thing. I wandered on and on, and up and down, but there was no hope of paying for what I had taken, and I grew desperate. Then——"

The Archbishop's face was covered with his hand, and he repeated gently:

"God is very merciful."

"I started for the river," said the woman quickly. "I thought I would jump in and drown myself. Oh, it was awful! The river called me. I felt I must go. I think I began to run. Then suddenly I heard a church bell."

"Yes?"

"And brought up as I have been, one does not lightly disregard a church bell, so I went in, and there were just a few people there, with a priest explaining the Prayer Book. He said that the Archbishop wished the Prayer Book to be understood, and today he had come to that part about the forgiveness of sins. I never knew before that it was like that. I thought that I was lost eternally, but he made it all plain about repentance and God conveying pardon to us, and ... I began to hope."

The weak voice faltered for a moment, and then went on:

"When the others went away I stopped, and he came up, and I asked if it meant any one so bad as me ... and then he helped me to confess it all to God, and afterwards he gave me Absolution. . . . The words ring in my mind now. 'By His Authority I absolve thee from all thy sins.' I am not lost eternally, and . . . and ... I thank and bless you."

The tightness in the Archbishop's throat kept him silent for a moment. It was as if he had suddenly reached the center of life, and felt the passionate beat of human hearts.

She sat with drooping head, and relaxed hands, feeling that her companion had never before come across sin so deep.

She would go now—out from this beautiful room, and pace once more up and down the

streets of the city which had no place for her in it. She tried to rise, and then the Archbishop spoke quickly:

"When did you last have any food?"

"Yesterday," she faltered.

He sprang up and rang the bell.

"Don't talk just now," he said gently. "Just lean back and rest. There, that is better."

"God is very merciful," she whispered, **but** the words were inaudible.

The next thing that she knew was that a tray was brought in containing many things, tea, bread and butter, and a boiled egg; there was shining silver and delicate china—she was dreaming! No, there was the little teaset, and tea in the hayfield, and a child's happy laughter. How did the words go?

Something about a field of new-mown hay, she could say it now all through if she could only remember how it began.

"Drink this, you will feel better."

Why, it was not the old rectory or the hayfield after all, and the little boy had gone.

"That is right," said the Archbishop at last. "Now I am going to have a cup of tea too, and you must not talk till you have finished your egg."

When at last the meal was over, she put down her cup with a smile.

"Thank you, Johnny," she said simply.

The old childish name, never heard since his schoolboy days, made him start, and he said: "You must know me! Who are you?"

"Have you forgotten Miss Fanny?" she asked.

"Oh, no," he cried, with something like a sob, "you are not Miss Fanny?"

She mistook him, and rose to her feet.

"I should not have told you," she said, "after I had fallen so low."

"You should have told me long ago," he said, "and let me help you, as you helped me when I was a child."

She sat down again and whispered:

"So you remember?"

"Dear Miss Fanny, my earliest memories are of you. Do you remember how I came to the rectory for lessons, and your pride over my Erst verse?"

"About a hayBeld. I cannot remember how it begins."

The Archbishop repeated:

"Patiently dear doggie sits

Waiting for some little bits.

He likes bread and milk as well

As the rest do, I can tell.

Do not mind, my doggie dear,
You shall have them, never fear,
Then we will go out and play
In a field of new-mown hay."

"That has worried me lately," said Miss Fanny.

"The sound got into the river, but I could not remember it all."

"Tell me," he said, "how things happened. Your father?"

"He failed much the last few years," she said, "and I spent a great deal on getting priests to help him. He would have been heartbroken anywhere else. He died rector of the parish."

"And then?"

"Well, there was only I, and most of the money went for repairs. For a time I got daily teaching, but I was not up to the requirements of today. Then I became a companion, and my old ladies died at last. I drifted to London—it is the land of the homeless—you know the rest."

"God forgive me," cried the Archbishop. "Why did you not write to me?"

"I could not beg," she said simply.

Something had to be done, and after a time he rang the bell.

"The motor at once," he said. "No, I will have a taxi."

"You must not trouble about me," said Miss Fanny, rising.

"I am going to take you to a friend of mine, where you shall stay till you are well again."

The tears rushed to her eyes.

"Not yet," she faltered. "There is one thing I must do first. I must go to the bakery and tell them I cannot pay them yet."

"For the love of the old days in the hayfield you must let me pay them," he said, and he almost added that by his authority as Archbishop he dispensed her from this act of restitution, but he cared for her too much to dare it.

They went together in the taxicab slowly down the street where she was to identify the shop, and alone she went in and paid the price. Then he took her to a house where they were received by a lady whose face seemed to bear the mark of a life lived in the sunshine of God's Presence.

"I have brought you a friend to nurse and care for," said the Archbishop, and they were only just in time to catch Miss Fanny as she fainted away.

Often in the old days she had carried him, a happy laughing child, from the Hall to the rectory, over the daisied lawn; now he carried her silently up the staircase to the first rest and love she had known for many days.

That evening as they sat at dinner, Crawford was called away to the telephone. On his return he said:

"It was a message to your Grace that someone will not live through the night. I made them repeat the name, but I could hear nothing but 'Miss Fanny.' They said you would

understand."

"Yes," said the Archbishop, laying down his knife and fork, "I will go at once."

"Will you not finish dinner?" said Crawford.

"No, I have had enough. Will you come with me? I may want to send you to St. Petrox. Order a taxi at once."

A quarter of an hour later the Archbishop was speaking to a physician in the house where Miss Fanny lay dying.

There was nothing that could be done; he had tried all possible remedies; she was literally worn out, and the heart could do no more.

So the Archbishop went quietly up the stairs while the chaplain sped on his errand, that the parting soul should not go **on** its journey without the Sacrament.

Miss Fanny looked more like her old self than she had in the morning. Her hair, released from any fastening, had fallen back into the wave he remembered so well, and the blue eyes had the clearness of her girlhood.

But her mind was drifting, and the feeble words were of the old days, and he saw the roses and the honeysuckle by the rectory porch.

"He can say it," she whispered. "Johnny can say I the whole verse. Oh, how does it begin?"

Again the Archbishop repeated the childish verse, and she seemed to sleep for a time.

When her eyes opened again there was complete consciousness in her gaze, as he knelt down
and;

prayed

'I wish I could remember it all,' she said presently. "'By His Authority ... I ... absolve thee.'

^^

Then very clearly the Archbishop said:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly re-' pent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences: And by His Authority, committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The Archbishop never forgot the look on Miss Fanny's face as his voice ceased, and he prepared to give her her last Communion.

Then came a long silence as she grew weaker, but once more her lips moved, and he bent over her to catch the feeble whisper.

5

AMONG the piles of letters that arrived in Easter Week, the Archbishop kept a few which he

answered himself at once. This was the first:

"MY LORD ARCHBISHOP, I feel that I must write 1 to tell your Grace what has happened. Till this year I acquiesced in the idea that it was impossible really to fast during the forty days of Lent, and I imagined that I did all that was needful by abstaining from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays, giving up my pipe, and a few other things. But your desire that the Prayer Book should be obeyed showed me that I had no more right to put my own ideas on fasting in the place of the rules of the Prayer Book than I had to reason that parochial visitation could take the place of the Daily Offices. So I just took fasting to mean what it used to mean—and I had one meal a day. Of course at first it was not easy, but I got along all right That is not the point I meant to dwell upon; it is the other side—the spiritual side. There were things I had never guessed at before—the losing of one life to find another infinitely better and higher. Hitherto I had been content to pass over that verse about 'this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting,' with the criticism that it was thought to be interpolated. Now I know what it means. It is a reality. Fasting opens a gate to prayer which in all these years I have not known. Such revelations are not to be talked about, but I thought I might tell your Grace, for had it not been for your Pastoral I might have gone on to the end of my life with a conventional Lent, which left me little altered and my people not at all. I used to think that special preachers and extra services would effect all that was needful. Now I can thankfully say that the chief difficulties in the parish are melting away like snow in summer. To use the French phrase, it seems that when we get tete-a-tete with God, we can trust Him to do everything. For the encouragement of the physically weak, perhaps I may say that I am not the most robust of men. But I have proved by experience that we over-estimate the necessity of food in all seasons, and overlook the positive advantages of a real fast. My health has not suffered."

The Archbishop read on to the end, and when Crawford came in he said, "My clergy put me to shame in every direction. Do you remember a Cow-ley Father saying that obedience consisted in doing what you were told, not in Ending out a hundred reasons for not doing it? It is remarkable how the sight of obedience humbles those who see it."

The next letter was written feebly in pencil, and dated from the Hostel of St. Luke.

It ran: "I must apologize for my writing, but I am just getting over an operation made necessary by worry and overwork. My husband has a parish where there were few helpers, so I had the Girls Friendly Society and Mothers' Union and other things to manage by myself. We have six children, and can only keep one servant, so there was not much time. I tried not to let things down; my predecessor had been strong and done so much. But after the Archbishop's letter came out, my husband altered everything, and now, when I go back, I can have a little rest, and the surgeon here thinks that I shall really live and get well. It seems so wonderful."

"God bless her," murmured the Archbishop.

The third letter was very different.

"TO HIS GRACE THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

"SIR, I am an old man and a soldier, and I have never written to a bishop in my life, but now something has happened. I was brought up in Scotland, a Presbyterian, but since my marriage I have always received the Holy Communion here in the parish church. Last week in talking to the rector I said I had never been confirmed, and then he said that unless I were confirmed, or intended to be, he could not administer the Holy Communion to me. I was very angry. Then he showed me the rule in the Prayer Book: There shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.' Now what I ask is, why were we never told of these rules before? Do you think, sir, that an Army man is going to disobey orders? The upshot of it is that I am learning the Catechism (knowing only the Shorter Catechism) with a view to being confirmed. You will know my name. Some say I blundered in South Africa, none can say that I ever disobeyed orders; and let me, as an old man, give you a word of advice (though from what I hear, you hardly need it): Tell your officers to make their rules plain, and to let the people know they are meant to be obeyed, then men will respect the Church more than they do. There is an Army rule that no soldier who has committed suicide has military honors at his funeral, and the way that it is kept is not by making exceptions.—Believe me to be. Your obedient servant."

And then came the name of an old General, known to the whole world for gallantry and valor.

The last letter came from the rector of a busy city parish.

"YOUR GRACE, I feel that I may write fully, for I am in great trouble. I obeyed your request, as I believe all priests of every shade of opinion have done throughout the country, and I dropped our various organizations and kept only the Church. The activity in this parish had been great. We had Church Lads Brigade, C.E.M.S. Clubs for every age and class, social evenings, societies, guilds. The whole day was occupied, and we priests rushed from one thing to another, with little time to think. We had a weeknight service, but few other services except on Sundays and holy days. Now we have daily Morning and Evening Prayer, and a Celebration of Holy Communion on Thursdays. But—how can I

make you understand it? In a sense, now that all the organizations are gone, I feel as if nothing is left. Honestly I thought I was doing my duty to my parish by all those things, and I worked hard. At my ordination, and before, my vicar laid stress on them too, and no one taught me anything else. Now there is plenty of leisure, and your Pastoral lays stress on prayer, but (it sounds a terrible thing to say) no one ever taught me to pray in the way I see now that one

ought to pray. It is the same with thinking. There is plenty of time now to think, but it is an art not learnt in a day when the rush of a lifetime has driven it out. You will be shocked and astonished, but I have told you only the truth. It seems to me now that to be a priest is a great deal more than I used to think. The only thing I can do is to give up my living. But what can I do? I am too old to start other work, even if I had any special qualifications. In the old rush and hurry I never saw how terribly I fell short. I almost came to see your Grace, but you can have no time to deal with such questions. Forgive my writing. I do not know my bishop personally, and I feared he would be surprised if I mentioned such subjects. . . ."

"Crawford," said the Archbishop suddenly, "I want to send you to C—— for a few days to look after the parish, while the vicar comes to stay here." The result of that visit was that the vicar did not resign his parish.

6

ENGLAND had never looked more beautiful than it was this April, with its wealth of flowering trees and its days of cloudless beauty succeeding each other, almost as if the clouds had become a thing of the past. In the gardens lilacs, rhododendrons, and laburnums formed a rare feast of color, while the blossom in the orchards and on every fruit tree shimmered gloriously against the azure sky.

Nothing could equal the delicate green of the trees, as yet untouched by dust or storm or scorching suns.

Crawford, enjoying a week's holiday with some friends, lay back in a deck chair, looking up at the perfect scene.

"Well," he said at last, "this gives one some idea of Paradise."

"Yes," said his hostess, then there was a long silence. "You know what it is," she said at last, as if in continuation of something that had gone before, "to feel that something is part of a perfect whole, but then comes in the element that spoils it, and your Paradise grows earthly."

"I am the most prosaic of men, so you must not mind my saying that I do not quite understand. Are you referring to that much quoted, unpoetic line: 'And only man is vile'?"

"No, I was thinking of something quite different. Shall I explain? You know we are half the year here, and half the year in Warwick Square, our town house. Now there is no comparison with the beauty we have here and what is found in London. The park is lovely, but it does not come near what we are looking at now."

As she paused for a moment, Crawford made a sound of assent.

"Then Sunday comes," she went on in her pleasant voice, "and one goes to church, and all the time I am conscious that the vicar is anxious to please us and not offend the farmers; and the blue sky and the trees you can see through the open window seem really more inspiring than the manner in which Matins is rendered with a wheezy harmonium and some small boys who are made to sing what is beyond their powers."

"My dear critic, why do you not give a new harmonium and take the choir in hand?"

"All harmoniums are wheezy, and those who are here all the year must manage things. Now there is the other side of the picture. From Warwick Square we soon cross Vauxhall Bridge Road, and find ourselves in a dear, slummy street leading to St. Petrox."

He nodded in silence.

"There is nothing that can possibly be considered beautiful. Ragged children play on the pavement. Men with barrows of vegetables stand about talking to women, even more unkempt than themselves. Then there comes a flash of red as a Boys' Home marches by to church, and from every turning and alley people come on their way to church—poor, lame men, happy working-boys, gentlemen and ladies, nurses, men of every rank and age. Then we go into church, and we forget that we know the clergy. There is a huge rood screen——"

"I know," said Crawford.

"Well, every one is just there, simply and solely to worship God. It sounds simple. Of course when we go to church, we always go to worship God, but we don't always do it, but there we can just gather up all the things we have hoped and wanted and meant. . . and . . . leave them."

On the short green grass two wagtails were running in the sunshine, and the chiff-chaff was singing his perpetual note in a tree close by, but Crawford kept silence. •

"You remember the time of the war," she went on in a lower voice, "when Ted was wounded and Dick fell ill. There came a Sunday morning when the nurse said that I might safely leave Dick, and I went to St. Petrox. Do you know the two verses they so often sing at the time of Communion?"

"I think not."

She repeated quietly:

"Father, see Thy children bending at Thy Throne, Pleading here the Passion of Thine only Son, Pleading here before Thee all His dying Love, As He pleads it ever in the Courts above. Not for our wants only we this Offering plead, But for all Thy children who Thy mercy need, Bless Thy faithful people, win Thy wandering sheep, Keep the souls departed who in Jesus sleep."

"It seemed then," she went on reverently, "as if one knew His love for our dear ones, whether in

life or death. Nothing really mattered but God. . . . And Dick got well, and Ted came home."

Birds might sing with ecstatic joy of existence, but Crawford kept silence.

"And afterwards I thought," she said, looking across the garden, "what it would be if it were like that everywhere; if the Church in the country brought things home to the people in the same way, for, of course, the Truth must be the same everywhere. And since your Archbishop's move, there is a beginning in that direction, and even the farmers are getting to see that the Church means something more than the vicar's endeavor to carry out what Ted and I want, and we are beginning to study the Prayer Book."

"What about the wheezy harmonium and incompetent choir?"

"We shall not notice them when the worship of God is made the center of things. Didn't you see (only you men always need so much explanation) that I was talking of what used to be? Now, here comes the vicar, and I have told him that I am sure you will preach for him. Every one knows you are the Archbishop's chaplain, and we all have a regard for authority. Show them, as you can show them, all that a Sung Eucharist can be, and the vicar is prepared to start it at once. Ted, dear boy that he is, has given up going to Scotland this summer, and we shall have a house party of people used to St. Petrox to fill the church and give the service a fair start. How I have talked, but you encouraged me to run on."

7

CRAWFORD'S sister Was in town, having recently returned from Canada, and when Crawford asked for a few hours off in order that he might take her to luncheon somewhere, the Archbishop at once bade him to invite her.

"After luncheon you will talk more at your ease in your own study," he said. "Order tea when you like. I shall be out."

The brother and sister took stock of each other after a separation of some years, and she wondered less at the points in which he had developed than the points in which he was the same, for life had brought so many changes that permanence seemed the greater marvel.

There was much news to tell and hear when they were alone, and it was not for some time that she spoke of anything but the family and the life in Canada.

Then, as they sat at tea, the old confidence of brother and sister came back, and she spoke freely.

"I have just come from Eleanor's," she said. "They are a most happy family party, and the more I see of John the more I like him, but some things surprised me."

"What things?"

"Well, when it came to Sunday, Jim and I got **up** early to go to the eight o'clock

Celebration. We are so far from a church in Alberta, and it is wonderful to find it all so near at home."

Her brother nodded, and she went on:

"We found not only John and Eleanor in the hall waiting for us, but the three children—Tom, in his first year at Eton, Bobby, a boy in knickerbockers, and Ellie. I supposed they were going to walk to church with us, but no, they are all confirmed, and they came as communicants. Not only that, but as we walked down the village, cottagers came out, with little girls in white frocks, and boys the age of Bobby. When I left England, we should have found about half-a-dozen people in church, now the church seemed half full. I think Jim was shocked at first, but the children were all so reverent, and seemed so thoroughly to take part in everything that he said he could make no objection.

At first it seemed almost wrong to bring down such solemn mysteries to the comprehension of children."

"I expect, Ethel, that what they did was to let the children know that our LORD was there, and they just worshipped Him."

"Well, it seemed something like that, but it is very wonderful."

"It is wonderful."

"And your Archbishop has done all this?"

"What the Archbishop has done is to call attention to what the Prayer Book says on the matter. 'Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue, and be further instructed in the Church-Catechism set forth for that purpose.'¹

"But do you think it means that?"

"If we are to suppose that the Prayer Book does not mean what it says, where shall we stop?"

"Still, think of our days. I was eighteen when I was confirmed and you were sixteen or seventeen."

"Yes, but I could find several schoolfellows to back me up in saying that had we been taught in early boyhood the meaning of sacramental grace, and had we gained it for ourselves as constant communicants, we should not have had to deplore much that has marred our

¹ This and other Prayer Book quotations are from the Book of Common Prayer authorized in 1662, still the official Prayer Book of the Church of England. When the American Prayer Book was revised in 1928 the Exhortation to Sponsors, formerly at the conclusion of the Ministration of Holy Baptism, was incorporated with the Promises. (See American Prayer Book, p. 277)

lives."

"Do Tom and Bobby think of this?"

"I hope not. It seems to me that in scores of cases, these child-communicants will grow up without ever experiencing the bitter fires through which we went, from the very fact that grace is so strong within them. Surely a child of ten or twelve is nearer the purity of our LORD than the average boy of sixteen."

"Perhaps. There was something like that in a nymn which they sang at Mallams. Every one seemed to know it by heart. I can remember a few lines, 'Nature cannot hold Thee, Heaven is all too straight,' then something about the hearts of children holding what worlds cannot; and to hear them singing it, and to see their innocent faces made me feel rather bad; but a few hours later our children were full of fun and spirits."

"Yes, but fun and spirits are quite right. We must lose the idea that religion means respectability and middle age. That is where we have gone astray. Honestly, I am not wholeheartedly on the scheme of the Archbishop's, but in this point I agree with him and the Prayer Book thoroughly. The children have roused up the parents. Those villagers would not have gone a few years ago. By degrees it will seem an impossibility for a Churchman not to be a regular communicant. Think, especially with boys, how teachable and devout they are to the age of thirteen. By deferring confirmation so long we have lost our hold of the children. If they form the habit of regular Communion while they live at home, they will not lose it later—we must not keep the children from their Lord."

"I did not mean that," said his sister quickly. "Yet it bears that interpretation. If you are in London on Sunday you will see wonderful sights before eight in the morning. Not only delightful little girls and sturdy boys going with their parents to West-End churches, but poor children, too young to think much of their shabbiness, thronging our altars. If a blessing is coming upon London, I think that they have helped to bring it. And I think that you will find a gentleness and merriment among children which they did not always have. I heard a wonderful thing about a little girl at Clifton. It happened years ago, but it bears on the subject. She was only seven or eight, but she became very ill. Her mother told her that she would not recover, on which she said that she should like to receive the Holy Communion. Of course her mother told her that she was too young, but she sent for the priest who asked her why she wished it. She answered, 'I should like my LORD to come to me before I go to Him'. I suppose that no one would question the wisdom which granted her desire. No, Ethel, we are none of us worthy, but the children are not the least worthy."

For a time there was silence, the silence of those who know each other well, then the sister said musingly, "It seems strange how much has hapa pened while we were going on the same day after day, with no leisure to see visions or dream dreams.?"

"Perhaps the strangest thing," said her brother, "is that those who see visions and dream

dreams are those who really do the work. The building of Jerusalem 'in England's green and pleasant land' has progressed more rapidly during the last year than it did under all the active organizations of the past."

"I thought you were not wholehearted in your support of the Archbishop's scheme."

"I was not at first. I will answer the question when the two years are past."

Then they drifted back to the days of their childhood, and all too soon the afternoon was over.

8

"It comes to this," said the young man frankly. "My people have denied themselves in every way to give me a university education, in the hope that I should enter the Church."

"You entered the Church at your baptism," interrupted the Archbishop.

"Hoping I should take Holy Orders, and now I feel that I can't do it. I can't be a typical country priest, and I have not got it in me to be the real sort."

The Archbishop stretched out his hand and took a Prayer Book.

"Listen to this," he said, "from the Ordering of Priests:

"We exhort you, in the Name of our LORD Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance, into how high a Dignity, and to how weighty an Office and Charge ye are called: that is to say, to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the LORD; to teach, and to admonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. Have always therefore printed in your remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which he bought with his death, and for whom he shed his blood. The Church and Congregation whom you must serve, is his Spouse, and his Body. And if it shall happen the same Church, or any Member thereof, to take any hurt or hindrance by reason of your negligence, ye know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue. Wherefore consider with yourselves the end of your Ministry towards the children of God, towards the Spouse and Body of Christ; and see that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion,

or for viciousness in life.²

While the Archbishop read, the young man's head drooped lower and lower, as he shaded his face with his hand. Now he looked up suddenly, with shining eyes, "Oh!" he cried, passionately, "if that only had been done, but we never guessed, we never knew——"

"Yes," said the Archbishop, "if we all lived up to that, England would be Christian today and the world would be Christian tomorrow. The fault lies with us—with us."

The last words were so exceedingly sad that the young man exclaimed:

"I beg your Grace's pardon."

"No, what you said was true. This exhortation gives a wonderful picture of the function and greatness of the Ministry."

"That His children may be saved through Christ for ever," repeated the young man. "I never thought about it like that before. I see more than ever that I am unworthy, but this makes things different. Before I was sorry for my mother's disappointment, now——"

"Now?" repeated the Archbishop as he paused.

"I would have liked to lend a hand. I am not very good at explaining things, but it seems as if there's a big fight on, and I wish I could have done something for those likely to go under."

"Wait a little," said the Archbishop kindly. "It is the most grievous thing for a man to rush into the priesthood without any vocation, but it may well be that God is calling you. Take time for prayer and reflection. There is a three days' retreat at Beaconsfield, beginning on the 14th. Go to it: it will be no expense to you, and I will see you on your return."

"I do not know anything about a retreat," faltered the young man.

"It is merely keeping silence that the voice of God may be heard. Go with that idea, and do not trouble yourself whether you are doing what the others are doing. I shall expect you to luncheon on the 18th, till then the matter is in abeyance."

But when the young man came back there was a steadfastness in his face not known before.

"I have learnt so much," he said quietly, "but now, though I know my unworthiness more than I did before, I hope I may one day be His minister. I can't get those words out of my head: 'For they are the sheep of Christ, which he bought with his death, and for whom he shed his Blood.' I would like to help if I might, only I have so much to learn."

"God bless you," said the Archbishop gently. "Now we will talk."

9

HAVE really had a remarkable experience," said the Archbishop as he entered the study one

² See American Prayer Book, p. 539.

day. "I have been down to Hallington, where I found a community worthy of Nicholas Ferrar and Little Gidding." "Really!" said Crawford. "Yes, Hallington is a small market town which possesses one of those large rectories, built long ago when the clergy were rich, and various small villages cluster round it, only two or three miles distant. I have heard the Bishop say that life in those villages was intensely lonely, that there was a very small stipend for the parson, and that he had the greatest difficulty in getting men for the livings." "Yes?"

"Well, the present Rector of Hallington is a man of great saintliness, and his wife is an equal power. They seem to have imbibed the idea that the real strength of a parish lies not in its outer activities but in its inner devotion; and the life at the rectory carries out the Prayer Book ideal that priests fashion not only their lives but the lives of their household to the glory of God. At Hallington they live by rule. They rise at 6:30, and attend the daily Eucharist at 7:30. There is an oratory in the house where the Hours are said, and a great part of each day is mapped out in work."

"Teaching the children psalms, or doctoring the poor?"

"No, nor yet making harmonies of the Gospel. The details are very different, yet Nicholas Ferrar would find the same spirit. But I am leaving out the chief point. The rectory is used as the central point for the villages round."

"Do you mean that the priests of the villages live at the rectory?"

"Practically they do, though they sleep in their parishes from Saturday to Monday, and other times when needful; but they get the daily Eucharist, the sense of fellowship, and all that would be impossible where there are only a handful of laborers in the parish."

"But is it not rather hard on their parishes?"

"No, on the contrary, their parishes gain in every way. The community at Hallington rectory work all the parishes. At Friston, where there had been no one to help with the children or to play the harmonium, one of the Misses Fothergill does those things. The villages have no church schools, and bicycles make short work of the few miles' journey. The shed of bicycles was a sight to see. Fothergill makes full use of modern inventions, though his system is mediaeval, and telephones and typewriters are much used at the rectory. The girls are gifted, their music and painting being far above the average, with the result that the choir at Hallington is a treat to hear, while the singing in the villages, where the whole congregation are trained to sing and there is no distinctive choir, gives you a real sense of congregational worship. I found one girl painting an altar-piece for Friston, another typing prayers for the children, a third mending surplices."

"Still, so mixed a household must be rather queer. You will think me squeamish, but is it altogether desirable?"

The Archbishop laughed.

"I see what is in your mind. You picture a houseful of men and maidens, and all that might

ensue, but this is a strictly ordered establishment. They meet only at meals, and breakfast is taken in silence.

I had a long talk with Fothergill. His idea was that if the priests married, their women folk should be of distinct advantage to the Church. Of course in thousands of cases the amount of work done by the families of the clergy cannot be estimated, still there is the other side of the picture. Then he held very strongly with Nicholas Ferrar that an amount of work is possible and pleasant if it is done with method and by rule. I can only say that a day at Hallington is a singular refreshment and rest."

"Then do the Misses Fothergill never play tennis, or go to dances or theatres?"

"I believe they do all these things occasionally, but pleasure is not the object of their lives. They realize this, and the parish realizes it. I began to think—" the Archbishop broke off, and his eyes rested on his favorite picture.

"What did your Grace think?" asked Crawford, dropping his critical tone.

"I suppose it was a dream of what England might be if all rectories were like that. Even the servants worked with the spirit of the religious. There was no gossip, no fault-finding; only a large, gentle charity and great patience, as well as great happiness. The feverish snatching at pleasure that has been so marked a feature of the last few years has only brought discontent, overstrain, and misery. In seeking the will of God, happiness is found."

"Then," said Crawford quietly, "you will recommend this way?"

"Only privately. It is not a thing to be done by command, but an excellent way to find out by private devotion. And when once established, there are so many side issues. They were helping the wood carvers of the place to do something worthy of their Church. People will begin to discover that the parish Church is their own, and to take pride in working for it. You must go down there one day and see it all for yourself. It is a charm which defies description. I suppose the real wonder is, that in all these years none has been found to emulate Little Gidding. Well, we must turn to the letters now."

10

THE two years had passed with extraordinary rapidity, and it was the day before the great meeting of bishops and others, which had been Exed for so long a time.

During the day hardly a word was uttered by the Archbishop or Crawford on the subject, and the chaplain wondered whether the Archbishop dreaded the morrow as much as he did. In spite of frequent visits to distant parishes, the Archbishop was singularly in the dark as to the state of the country generally. Those who had written to him or seen him on special points were few among the many, and the matter had long ceased to interest the press. It

would not be surprising if the morrow disclosed a great lapse among the girls through lack of the G.F.S., or a sad falling off among women, through the suppression of the Mothers' Union, and so on, with the innumerable societies.

Would their supporters triumph, and would everything go on again as before?

The Bishop of D— would speak as violently as ever, and the Archbishop would be reminded of his youth and his absurdly Utopian scheme.

It would be better when the day was over, and the Archbishop knew the worst, yet it was a day that required much courage.

Dinner was a hurried meal taken almost in silence, and early in the evening the Archbishop bade Crawford good night. With a heavy heart the chaplain went to his study, but when later he sought his room, he knew that there was still a light in the chapel.

"Perhaps he would rather be alone," he sighed, but he could not sleep, and at last he went silently down the stairs, along the passages, and into the chapel.

The flickering light fell on the altar cross, and when Crawford's eyes grew accustomed to the dimness, he saw a figure bowed and motionless in prayer.

Through one window came a patch of light from the moon, and everything seemed intensely still.

"If two of you shall agree . . ." It seemed almost as if a voice spoke in the stillness; yet no sound was there. Did the great city outside sleep? Does London ever sleep?

At least in the great wards of the hospital close by, patients lay sleepless and nurses ministered to them, speaking of the day. Further away voices were disputing in Westminster and reporters still busy.

How many souls were sending up petitions to the great throne of God, where the sighing of a contrite heart is heard above the clamour of the world?

"If two of you shall agree . . ."

They had agreed.

Close by, the river flowed on, as it will flow to the end of time, with its strong relentless current;

but a force of greater power was at work within the chapel as the hours went by.

Silence at last, and no distant roll of traffic, while it was darker than before.

The strain in Crawford's mind had given place to a great surrender to the will of God, as he knelt there without words or definite thought, only pleading in intention the One Great Sacrifice.

Then suddenly everything grew visible, and through the window came the pure rays of early dawn.

For the first time the Archbishop moved, then he rose from his knees, stretched his arms, looking up towards the light, and as he turned he caught sight of his chaplain.

"If two of you shall agree . . ."

Crawford caught his eyes, he rose to his feet, and together they bowed towards the altar and left the chapel.

"It shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." The night was past, and once more the sun had risen on a day of boundless hope.

11

TODAY as the Archbishop looked at the faces before him, he said little, asking rather that he might learn from those better qualified to know what was their experience of the past two years.

There was a singular quiet in the assembly, which had not been there two years before, and when the Archbishop sat down the Bishop of D— rose to his feet and spoke:

"There is only one thing I wish to say," he said clearly, "and that is that I know now that I was wrong in what I said before, and I apologize for it. If the experience of my brethren is the same as mine, they will know that we have been translated into a more spiritual world where words and arguments are lost in prayer and communion with God. Others will give expression to what I know and feel. I can only thank our Archbishop for setting our feet on the ladder, which, while it starts on earth, rests in heaven. For so long we had grown accustomed to commercial statistics and human organizations that we had forgotten that the Church, the divine instrument, was not meant to be a copy of human conventions."

To those accustomed in debate to the fiery utterances of the Bishop of D—, this speech seemed as great a wonder as anything that could happen.

Then another bishop got up and spoke of the obligation laid on the Episcopate to "show themselves gentle and merciful for Christ's sake to poor and needy people, and to all strangers destitute of help,"³ and as he spoke the Archbishop saw again the pale face of Miss Fanny, while for a moment the library seemed to change into the hayfield of long ago.

The Prelate, who had no eloquence, made a confession rather than a speech. Often in the past organization, meetings, and public business had taken up most of the day and much of the night. Now they had come back to the Church's ideal:

³ From the Form of Ordaining and Consecrating Bishops. See American Prayer Book, p. 555. The quotations immediately following will be found on page 558.

"Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them. ... Hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring again the outcasts, seek the lost." For his part, he could say that this side of his ministry had been crowded out. He felt it a reproach, possibly his brethren might share his opinion, that so seldom had he been sought in the old days by his clergy for consolation or help, though they had come in scores when worried by contentious parishioners or churchwardens. It was not to the bishop that the lonely parish priest turned, yet surely the bishop was pledged to be his rather and his guide. The term "shepherd" made him reflect. "Be so merciful, that you be not too remiss; so minister discipline, that you forget not mercy." Did this picture call up to the mind of the ordinary man a bishop?

He was followed by other speakers who gave some idea of the state of the Church throughout the country till a perception of the whole grew before the minds of the hearers with force and reality. Daily offices were said in every church, and it was seldom true that there was no one to come. There were rural districts where the Litany was said at 5 A.M., and the laborers joined in it on their way to work. Work was suspended everywhere for the short space on Rogation Days that special prayers were said in farmyard or field, and people were beginning to believe in prayer now that they understood it.

Parish priests also found that a congregation at the daily Eucharist depended upon two things—that the people were taught, and that the hour was a possible one for the parishioners. As a whole, the clergy rose much earlier and retired earlier, and were not worn out with clubs and meetings.

Again the mediaeval standard seemed to be coming back, when few boys in England, gentle or simple, did not serve or sing about the altar.

But perhaps the most striking testimony was borne by a bishop who was also an M.D., and he prefaced his remarks by saying that he was stating the impression of the medical profession, and not merely speaking personally. In the peaceful calm that was sweeping over England, there was a marked decrease in hysteria and insanity. Of recent years the stress and strain of modern life had been so great that many who had not succumbed to it were yet so exhausted in nerve and brain that their powers were enfeebled, and unless a pause had come in the rush, it was difficult to see what would have been the future of the human race. But a pause had come, and with leisure, growth had become evident—growth of brain, of power, of genius.

It was said that in England during the last century, none had had so good an opportunity as those born in the seventies. Favorable conditions were coming back, acknowledged and welcomed even by those outside the Church, who could not understand the circumstances which had brought them about, and children would grow up, not handicapped in the race of life. Leisure had come not only to pray, but to think and to develop as God meant man to develop. No one could see visions or dream dreams if he were incessantly running from

committee to meeting, and fighting with engagements too numerous to keep. That was not what life was meant to be. Man was made in the image of God, and some reflection of that image, he was meant to give to a dazzled, wondering world. He was meant to do God's work in God's way, not in a poor imitation of the world's way. The weapons of our warfare were not carnal, but mighty through God, and it was as true now as it was when the psalmist wrote it that "the gentleness of God made us great."

At this point, when some were beginning to think that the speaker was wandering from his theme, he sat down, and another bishop got up, whose face of beaming happiness was good to look upon.

"I am strongly convinced," he said, "that we bishops were the root of all the mischief." Then, when the laughter had died away, he went on gravely, "There is no need for me to dwell much on what Sunday now is, whether you spend it in London or some country village. In the early morning we no longer walk through deserted streets or solitary lanes to a half-empty church. No, the children are all up, God bless them, and they have brought their fathers and mothers. As soon as our man-made rule of the age of sixteen for confirmation was disavowed, half of our present difficulties went with it. The children are flocking into the kingdom of God; they believe what we tell them at confirmation, and become regular communicants from the first. Any fears we may have had of irreverence have been groundless, and children are thronging our altars. Now that there really is religious education, we can afford to distress ourselves little about the ruling of the State. To the children of England our LORD has become a Living Person, and once more ours will become a Christian country. Parents are roused to a sense of their responsibility now that it is really children whom we confirm, and the family prayer in many a cottage puts us to shame."

The next speaker dwelt on all that had grown out of a belief in the efficacy of prayer.

"People are coming to us," he said, "as of old they came to Philip, or as Inglesant went to De Cressy, saying, 'Sir, we would see Jesus/ and perhaps the whole purpose of the ministry is to enable them to do this. I remember years ago, the shock it was to some people when it was said that the object of the parish priest was to teach his people to pray and to meditate, but now our outlook is changed; and we are wise in acknowledging that prayer is an art which requires to be learnt, and for which the real teacher is the Holy Spirit. Nothing is more remarkable than the growth of retreats for ordinary working men and women. It would be sad to reflect, were it not useless to spend much time in recalling a past when we meant to do well, how much time and money has been spent in exterior schemes and organizations for the welfare of our people, which never touched their personality or character. Now we have grasped the truth that the great thing in life is to get a man tete-a-tete with God, and we are surprised to find that the Prayer Book grasped the idea all the time. From his baptism to his death the Christian is cared for, and what we, as Churchmen, have to remember is that

character is of infinitely more importance than circumstances. I have not forgotten what was once said to a parish priest who complained that he could not convert his people. 'You must first convert yourself.' We bishops owe a great debt of gratitude to the Religious Communities who have made retreats a reality to us. When we become tete-a-tete with God, our ordinations and our influence with men is of a far deeper order, and so on through all the States of life. After all, there is a divine paradox in spiritual things, and if we would affect men, we must keep our eyes fixed on God. At last we are learning to be still, and when England has learnt the lesson thoroughly she will have that added knowledge that she knows God."

Afterwards Crawford said to Dennett:

"Many spoke, but they all came to pretty much the same conclusion, and I was waiting for the bishops to finish, to hear the opposition get up in the persons of the societies so long suppressed."

"And what did they say?"

"Well, the first to speak was the secretary of a society for befriending children, and he said that the ground was cut from under his feet, for men were beginning to learn their duty towards God and their duty towards their neighbor, so that the evils which they had combated no longer existed."

"Then was there no opposition?"

"Oh, yes, a few secretaries spoke up for the old state of things, but they carried no conviction with them."

"And what was the practical outcome?"

"Well, you can hardly say that anything was practically decided. You see the meeting was a general view of the attempt to obey the Prayer Book, and certainly the consensus was that the state of things brought about by restored obedience was desirable and remarkable. Possibly a few societies will go on for a time till men see that there is no need for them."

"Then how did it all end?"

"Ah!" cried Crawford, "you should have been there to hear that."

But he had grown silent, and Dennett went away without hearing anything more, while the chaplain let his memory go back to the two final speeches.

The Primate of the northern province had risen when all who wished to speak had done so, and as he used the word Britain instead of England, some remembered all that was owed to the Scottish Church, while visions of Iona rose before their minds. Then he pictured the Church coming down from the early days, strong when she was spiritual, weak as material prosperity and politics became interwoven with her life. Then came the deadness of respectability, and men lost their ideals, laboring ceaselessly for what could never satisfy the human heart.

"Have you ever watched a field ripe with hay in early summer?" asked the Archbishop, "its

silver-green glinting in the sunlight. And then there comes a breeze sweeping over its surface, turning it red as it passes by. To us it is a simile. This pleasant land of ours was full of souls made in the image of God, but only when the breath of His Holy Spirit had moved them, was revealed the deep red bond of a world bought by a Saviour's Blood, and they knew what really held them, and could never fall back to a lower level, having once tasted what it was to be saved by His Life. So again, as of old, we are led forth in the search of the Holy Grail, and we can afford to leave the grasping of more material things to others. Many a man since the days of Blake has cried:

"I will not cease from mental strife, Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand Till I have built Jerusalem, In England's green and pleasant land."

"But till lately Jerusalem has grown but Slowly. Even now there is much to deplore in our land, but the city is rising surely if slowly towards Heaven. An earlier verse in the poem gives us the motive of it all—the fact that the feet of our Lord once trod this earth of ours. When we remember that, and all that it entails, we lose the thought of heaven on earth and of earth in Heaven. To us who are granted the extension of the Incarnation in the most Blessed Sacrament, there is no need for words, for in that Mystery we all meet, we with Him, and with those gone before whose vision of the Holy Grail is in the Perfect Light."

No one spoke, for their hearts in glad certainty consumed his words, and they were still.

Then the Archbishop of Canterbury rose and all eyes were turned on him.

"Thank God," he said simply, "for all that we have heard today. To Him alone is the glory for the blessing which rests on our land. I cannot claim to have shared the Archbishop of York's dream of building Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land, in carrying out what has been erroneously called 'The Archbishop's Scheme.' I have acted as I have done because it seemed to me right. An old General wrote to me the other day: Tell your officers to obey rules and to make them known.' My brothers, I know that these two years have not been easy for you, and I can never say how thankful I am for the loyalty of the Church under a distasteful order. That obedience has not led to failure, we have been told today; but had the immediate result been apparent failure, to my mind our duty would have been still the same. Almighty God gives us our work, but the issues of it are in His hands, and it is not for us to worry about results. It is the sowing that counts, not the reaping."

Crawford's eyes kindled as he looked at his friend standing before them, Saul-like in his stature, splendid in his strength and confidence.

"We must remember the force of a passage in Scripture too little emphasized, 'Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, and much people was added unto the LORD.' Personal holiness is the Lord's weapon for the conversion of the world, not counterattractions, or societies to enclose the weak; and personal holiness is brought about by prayer and the use of the Sacraments. The obedience to the Prayer Book shown ' during these

two years by our Provinces proves to us that that Prayer Book has not all the faults formerly attributed to it. Revision may come after a time when, through the length and breadth of the land, our people know the book by heart, and wish it to restore a few things that are ancient and Catholic; but I think that at present we are wise in letting it stand as it does. Naturally the study of the Prayer Book has led to the study of history, and men no longer speak of the Church in England as a new creation at the time of the Reformation. Much as we owe to St. Augustine's mission, we know that -long before that time the Church existed in the British Isles, the same Church that we have today with her unbroken succession of bishops, priests, and deacons."

Then, very shortly, **he** described what it was **to** be in the world and not of the world, till a picture grew of the Spiritual Kingdom which could never die—a kingdom in which all might find a home—the rich and the poor, young and old, and the laughing, happy children.

They were coming at last, from the busy factories and the crowded streets; from the wealthy homes and the public schools, over the moorland hills and through the country lanes—all the thousands in our land were discovering that they were children of God, and that He had a place for each in His Church. They had been convinced of this truth because they had seen in the undershepherds the reflection of the life of the One Great Shepherd. It was our Lord Jesus who said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

With a sudden impulse the whole assembly rose to their feet, and stood motionless, while the Archbishop's voice rang out, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." Within the library there was silence, deep silence; then it seemed as if all the Church bells throughout the world rang their joyful peals which went swelling up to the great throne of God.

One more the bishops had dispersed, and the Archbishop and his chaplain were together in the study.

"Now," said the Archbishop, turning towards him, "I will grant your request. You may resign if you wish it. Ridley, Holt, Cunningham—which of them shall I choose?"

"Do you think," cried Crawford, "that anything in the world would tempt me to leave you? I am here till you send me away."

"How would it be," said the Archbishop with almost boyish glee, "if we gave ourselves a holiday tomorrow, and took a day on the river? Don't we deserve it for once?"

To which proposition Crawford heartily agreed.

Then, as it often loved to do, the Spring sunlight lingered on the Thorn-Crowned Head of the Man of Sorrows in the old picture on the wall, and once more the eyes of both men were fixed on it.